



U.S. Department of Justice

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EVENT: Sentencing

Defendant: Vassalo K. Russell

MAN WHO THREATENED TO BLOW UP FEDERAL COURTHOUSE SENTENCED

Vassalo K. Russell, 29, of Detroit was sentenced in federal court in Detroit today to 87 months imprisonment for threatening to use a weapon of mass destruction against U.S. government property, a false income tax refund claim conspiracy, and a probation violation from a prior federal bank fraud conviction, announced United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy.

The sentence was handed down by United States District Judge Gerald E. Rosen.

Murphy was joined in the announcement by FBI Special Agent in Charge Daniel D. Roberts, of the Detroit Division, and Maurice M. Aouate, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation.

Russell pleaded guilty to the charges on November 22, 2005. The information presented to the Court at the time of the plea revealed that between July 13, 2004 and August 23, 2004, Russell made three separate bomb threats against the Theodore Levin United States Courthouse, the same building where he was sentenced today. Russell also engaged in a bogus income tax refund scheme involving forged W2 forms during the early part of 2003

and violated the terms of his federal supervised release by making the bomb threats.

“This case underscores the gravity with which my office, the FBI and the U.S. Marshal Service view terrorism related threats and demonstrates our strong commitment to investigating and prosecuting these types of offenses,” said United States Attorney Murphy. “The Department of Justice takes threats to injure the persons or property of others as extremely serious crimes and will vigorously prosecute those who attempt to terrorize the public by issuing such threats. This is particularly so when, as here, a threat includes the use of a bomb or other weapon of mass destruction.”

In announcing the sentence, United States Attorney Murphy commended the work of the Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service, who conducted the investigations, and the United States Marshal Service, which arrested Mr. Russell in Atlanta, Georgia in 2005. The prosecution was handled by Assistant United States Attorney Kenneth R. Chadwell.